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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 001750

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SUBJECT: SPAIN-VENEZUELA ARMS TRANSFERS: DEMARCHE ON U.S.
THIRD-PARTY TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS

REF: STATE 79694

Classified By: Political Counselor Kathy Fitzpatrick; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Poloff met with MFA Office Director for International Disarmament and Terrorism Issues Marcos Rodriguez on May 9 to convey reftel points on U.S. third-party transfer requirements related to Spain's sale of weapons to Venezuela.

Rodriguez (protect) said that he was "one of many" in the MFA who believed both the arms sale and the Zapatero government's entire approach to Venezuela were serious mistakes. Nevertheless, the arms sale had been concluded and Rodriguez said it made sense to begin focusing on details related to the transfer. He thanked poloff for the demarche and said he would relay the USG points to the MOD and other participants in Spain's interagency team that will oversee the weapons sale.

2. (C) Rodriguez said that internal discussions had been underway for some time on possible USG objections to elements of the sale to Venezuela. It was his understanding that the aircraft in question (CN-235 and CN-295) would be sold to Venezuela in their most basic configuration and the GOS calculated that the USG would be unlikely to object to that transfer. However, GOS officials were much less confident regarding the four coastal patrol boats and the four "ocean-going patrol boats." Though the GOS has not made a final determination regarding the configuration of the eight vessels, the technological complexity of the ships makes it more likely that there will be components which the USG would not like to see transferred to Venezuela. Rodriguez said he would provide the Embassy any GOS feedback regarding reftel points and assured poloff of Spain's desire to avoid any miscommunication on the weapons transfer to Venezuela.
MANZANARES